

J. Viresh Fernando

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Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam, MPP
Ministry of Transportation
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Toronto, ON, M7A 1Z8,

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam, MPP
Constituency office
Unit 105, 8130 Sheppard Ave. E
Toronto, ON, M1B 3W3

Dear MPP Thanigasalam:

Bill 104 - Tamil Genocide Education Week Act

On May 16, 2019 you introduced the above Private Members Bill. In the preamble to the Bill you clarify that the Bill refers to Tamil speaking people who live in the island nation now known as Sri Lanka or those who trace their heritage to Sri Lanka.

You, I and hundreds of thousands of people who trace their origin to Sri Lanka have made Canada, particularly the GTA, their home. This year I will be celebrating my forty-eighth Canada Day. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, celebrations will be very different in comparison to the past.

Canada Days is also a day of reflection. One of the things I have been reflecting upon has been the premise of Bill 104 which is also reflected in communiques by a few ill-informed Canadian politicians.

I studied law at McGill University in Montreal under human rights and constitutional law experts including but not limited to the late Prime Minister of Canada, Right Honourable Pierre Elliot Trudeau, Dean and Professor of Human Right Law John Peter Humphries who was the author of the first draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Professor Irwin Cottler the former Attorney general of Canada. After Law School went on to serve articles with the Department of Justice of the Government of Canada and upon being called to the Bar worked as Counsel for the Attorney General of Canada.

I am **not** a supporter of the Government of Sri Lanka. In fact, the Government of Sri Lanka considers me Persona Non Grata.

In the preamble to Bill 104 you claim that there has been genocide of the Tamil People of Sri Lanka. You and others of Tamil heritage have made this claim elsewhere too.

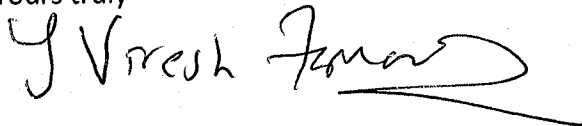
As a Canadian and as a Lawyer, I find your baseless and false claim of "Tamil genocide" completely offensive. I, therefore, challenge you to a debate of your assertion that the Tamil people of Sri Lanka were subject to genocide.

I suggest we jointly request a reputed Canadian journalist or academic to moderate the debate. The other logistical aspects such as invitees, fair distribution of tickets, location, date and time, media, etc., can be worked out by our respective representatives.

I am copying this to various Canadian politicians and others who have or have had a special interest in Sri Lanka or an interest in the various communities who trace their origin to Sri Lanka.

I am sure you will accept my challenge to debate your assertion as it has important implications for many Canadians irrespective of their heritage. I will leave my personal phone number with your assistant.

Yours truly



T. Viresh Fernando, CA, CPA
Barrister & Solicitor

Copied to:

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
Premier Rob Ford
Minister Stephen Lecce
Kathleen Wynne, MPP
Andrea Horwath, MPP
Michael Coteau, MPP
Mitzie Hunter, MPP
Vincent Ke, MPP
Mayors John Tory, Bonnie Crombie and Patrick Brown
Hon. Bob Rae
Prof. David Cameron
Media outlets